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STATE (NLB-TQ-41)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

NEGE THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

TO : The Secretary

THROUGH: S/S

FROM : INR - Roger Hilsman

OCT 23 1962

INTELLIGENCE NOTE: STRIDENT SOVIET STATEMENT ON PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S SPEECH  
EVASIVE REGARDING COUNTERMOVES

Missile Deployment Not Admitted. The Soviet Government statement this morning did not explicitly admit the fact of Soviet missile deployment in Cuba.

the statement says that Soviet military aid to Cuba was intended to increase that country's defense potential, thus obscuring the fact that offensive weapons are involved. Moscow's closest approach to a direct admission of the facts was the claim that all of the Soviet Union's armaments serve the purpose of defense.

Cuban Role Stressed. Moscow emphasized the Cuban role in the crisis throughout its statement. Thus by pooh-poohing the Cuban threat to the US, by indicating that Cuba naturally could not agree to the US demand for the withdrawal of Soviet weapons, by reaffirming Cuban willingness to negotiate all outstanding differences with the US, Moscow appeared to be avoiding as much as possible a direct confrontation with the US.

Obscure Threats. While warning that the US was playing with fire, Moscow avoided committing itself to specific courses of action which might involve the use of force. The Soviet government stated that nuclear weapons would not fall on US territory unless aggression is committed. While Moscow did not explicitly eschew first use of nuclear weapons in response to a US attack upon Cuba, the statement appears to have been carefully drafted to avoid making completely explicit any Soviet commitment to general war other than in the case

cc: S, U, M G, S/AL, G/PM, M,

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DOD, JCS, SQBRT, OGM-ORNL

of a direct attack upon the Soviet Union. Moscow made no statement about whether or not it would attempt to run the blockade.

Security Council Meeting. The operative paragraph of the statement calls for an immediate meeting of the Security Council to consider the question of the "violation of the UN Charter and threat to the peace on the part of the United States."

Military Preparations. Meanwhile, Moscow has announced a series of military preparations: Defense Minister Malinovsky reported to the Soviet government on measures to improve the battle readiness of Soviet forces, discharges of servicemen were halted and all leaves cancelled, Marshal Grechko called a meeting of representatives Warsaw Pact armies.

Implications. By confining its action to a call for a UN Security Council meeting Moscow apparently hopes to mobilize world opinion to force the US to abandon its blockade. Soviet military measures will serve the same purpose by contributing to a heightened war scare. Moscow may well expect incidents in Cuban waters or Soviet retaliations elsewhere to add to the atmosphere of tension. At the same time these military preparations serve to brace the USSR for any military eventuality. However, the Soviet reaction thus far suggests a high degree of circumspection and implies that the Soviet Union may be carefully leaving the back door open for a retreat from the danger of general war over Cuba.